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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the Calcasieu Parish (Louisiana) literacy project was twofold: (1) to pool the resources of the existing local adult education agencies in the area; and (2) to perpetuate the advancement of literacy in the area by bringing together adult education students, qualified volunteer tutors, and needed adult education materials in an atmosphere conducive to learning. The project had five objectives: (1) to establish a basic resource collection and nine satellite collections of adult education materials; (2) to provide four locations for tutoring sessions and/or independent study; (3) to recruit adult education students and volunteer tutors; (4) to provide a mechanism for matching adult education students with qualified volunteer tutors; and (5) to provide training and orientation sessions for volunteer tutors and librarians involved in the program. The project was based on a cooperative agreement between the Calcasieu Parish Library, the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana, and Calcasieu's Adult Education Department. All five objectives were successful. (Budgetary information is included.) (NLA)

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CALCASIEU PARISH LIBRARY LITERACY PROJECT

FINAL REPORT

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GRANT NUMBER: R167A80073

LSCA TITLE VI LITERACY GRANT AWARD - $25,000.00

ACTUAL AMOUNT EXPENDED: $25,000.00

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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CALCASIEU PARISH LIBRARY LITERACY PROJECT
FINAL REPORT

The Calcasieu Parish Library Literacy Project was funded by an LSCA Title VI Literacy Grant from the U.S. Department of Education for fiscal year October, 1988 - October, 1989. The project was based on a cooperative agreement between the Calcasieu Parish Library, the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana, and the Adult Education Department of the Calcasieu Parish School Board. The three agencies entered into the agreement with a two-fold purpose: (1.) to pool the resources of the existing local adult education agencies in the area and (2.) to perpetuate the advancement of literacy in the area by bringing together adult education students, qualified volunteer tutors, and needed adult education materials in an atmosphere conducive to learning.

Under the approved application the project had five main objectives: (1.) to establish a basic resource collection and nine satellite collections of adult education materials; (2.) to provide four locations for tutoring sessions and/or independent study; (3.) to actively recruit adult education students and volunteer tutors; (4.) to provide a mechanism for matching adult education students with qualified volunteer tutors; and (5.) to provide training and orientation sessions for volunteer tutors and librarians involved in the program. Each of the three agencies involved in the project were assigned certain responsibilities as a means of insuring the success of the project. The division of responsibilities was based on the five main objectives.

Under the first objective the Calcasieu Parish Library assumed the responsibility of establishing a basic resource collection and nine

satellite collections of adult education materials. The Executive Director of the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana and the Supervisor of the Adult Education Department of the Calcasieu Parish School Board assisted in the selection of materials to be included in the collections.

Under the second objective, the Calcasieu Parish Library agreed to make its facilities available for literacy uses such as meetings, tutorials, and independent study sites.

Under objectives three through five, the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana accepted responsibility for establishing and operating a one-on-one volunteer based tutorial program. This included the recruitment of volunteer tutors and students, the matching or pairing of tutors and students, maintaining necessary files, and the training of volunteers and librarians. The Calcasieu Parish Library agreed to serve as a referral agency referring students to the one-on-one tutorial program of the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana and/or the more formal classroom structured program of the Adult Education Department of the Calcasieu Parish School Board. The Adult Education Department agreed to have its staff serve as resource persons to aid volunteer tutors with problem students.

The division of responsibilities based on the five main objectives aided in meeting and exceeding the objectives specified in the approved application. This can be seen in a comparison of the actual program accomplishments with the goals and objectives set forth in the approved application.

ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

The first objective was to establish a basic resource collection and nine satellite collections of adult education materials. The Calcasieu Parish Library set up one basic resource collection at the Central Division Library and nine satellite collections at the following branch libraries: Carnegie Memorial Library, DeQuincy Branch Library, Epps Branch Library, Fontenot-Vinton Branch Library, Iowa Branch Library, Moss Bluff Branch Library, Starks Branch Library, Sulphur Branch Library, and Westlake Branch Library. The ten library collections included multi-level materials from 0 - 12 grade level for functional reading, competency writing, math, social studies, and science. Also included were supplemental materials, heavily inclined toward life coping skills such as job-training, job-finding and job-holding techniques. All of the materials were specifically designed for the needs and interests of the new adult reader.

The materials included in the collections were selected by the Calcasieu Parish Library reference staff with suggestions and recommendations from the Executive Director of the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana and the Supervisor of the Adult Education Department of the Calcasieu Parish School Board.

The actual accomplishments under this objective match those set forth in the approved application.

The second objective was to provide four locations for tutoring sessions and/or independent study. Library facilities across the parish were made available to the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana and the Adult Education Department of the Calcasieu Parish School Board. While the Adult Education Department could not set up any new classes due to staffing and financial problems, the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana did make full use of the available library facilities.

Four branch libraries with meeting rooms (Carnegie Memorial Branch, Epps Branch, Sulphur Branch, and the Moss Bluff Branch) were used for tutorial sessions and independent study. The Carnegie Memorial Branch Library, due to its central location, also served as a meeting site for workshops and training sessions sponsored by the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana. In addition, branch libraries without meeting rooms were also utilized as tutorial and independent study sites. Librarians and tutors observed branch activity patterns and isolated quiet or reduced activity periods. These were designated as quiet areas and utilized by tutors and/or students.

Tutors and students found library personnel receptive and agreeable. As a result library facilities were utilized to their full capacity and the actual accomplishments under the second objective match those set forth in the approved application.

The third objective was to actively recruit adult education students and volunteer tutors. The Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana has been actively recruiting tutors and students for over three years. In the past year the Literacy Council held five tutor training workshops in the Lake Charles area. Each workshop averaged approximately 30 -35 tutors, with the overall total being 204 tutors trained. The Literacy Council also enrolled approximately 194 students this year. At one time the Literacy Council was responsible for monitoring as many as 150 pairs of volunteers tutors and students, and it coordinated meeting places and schedules for tutorial sessions in libraries, churches, vocational schools, and other community locations.

The program has been extremely successful. Two other parish library systems have requested the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana assist them

in setting up and conducting tutorial workshops for their volunteer tutors. In addition, the Literacy Council has extended its services to establish a satellite program at the Louisiana Correctional Institution School (LCIS) at DeQuincy, Louisiana, where the Literacy Council has trained inmates to tutor other inmates. During the past year the Literacy Council has held two tutor training workshops at the correctional facility, and currently, there are twenty five active pairs of volunteer inmates tutoring other inmates.

Once again the actual accomplishments under the objective are the same as those set forth in the approved application.

The fourth objective was to provide a mechanism for matching adult education students with qualified volunteer tutors. The Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana was originally founded and funded by the Junior League of Lake Charles, Louisiana. Their main purpose was to establish a viable volunteer based, one-on-one tutorial program. The Literacy Council has been in operation for four years.

Under this objective, the Literacy Council recruited, screened, and trained volunteers in how to teach adults how to read and write, using the Laubach method. They interviewed and tested students to ascertain their approximate grade level competencies. The Literacy Council also matched or paired volunteer tutors and students, set up meeting schedules, and monitored student progress.

The Literacy Council maintained active student and tutor files containing initial interview records, placement information, progress charts, and evaluation records.

As one can see the Literacy Council has accomplished much more than was originally envisioned for the project. They have established a successful project in their own area and are reaching out to other near by areas.

Also, they not only have a viable core program in the Lake Charles area, but they have also established a satellite program on the grounds of a local correctional facility. Inmates in this facility have no other access to educational programs such as this one.

The actual accomplishments under this objective, not only match, but also exceed those set forth in the approved application.

The fifth and final objective of the project was to provide training and orientation workshops for volunteer tutors and librarians involved in the program. The Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana held five tutor training programs in the Lake Charles area. These were intensive twelve to fifteen hour training sessions, generally held over a weekend period. The training sessions were open to volunteer tutors and librarians working with the program.

The first training workshop was conducted by professional Laubach certified instructors, who were paid. The remaining workshops were conducted by Literacy Council staff and volunteers who received the Laubach training and were certified as tutor trainers.

The actual accomplishments under this objective match those set forth in the approved application.

ACTUAL EXPENDITURES BY BUDGET CATEGORIES

Actual budget expenditures match those specified in the approved application with one exception, which is reflected in the Supplies and Library Materials categories.

Personnel expenditures in the approved application were allotted $8,000.00. The money was to be used as a supplement to administrative

costs incurred by the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana. It was paid out in ten monthly installments.

The proposed applications carried a $2,000.00 allotment for supplies and a $15,700.00 allotment for library materials. The $2,000.00 allotment for supplies was to include $400.00 for collection promotion, $700.00 for materials acquisition, and $900.00 for library use. In view of the Literacy Council's desperate need for workbooks, the Calcasieu Parish Library decided to absorb all costs associated with the promotion and processing the collections. The $2,000.00 alloted for supplies was transferred to the library materials category to purchase more workbook materials. The library materials category was then increased to $17,700.

The Calcasieu Parish Library requested and received written documentation approving this change from the U.S. Department of Education. A copy of this documentation is attached.

IMPACT OF LSCA FUNDS

There is little doubt that the funds provided through this LSCA Title VI grant had significant impact on our on-going literacy program. Without the funds provided by this grant, our literacy project would not have had the necessary personnel or materials to operate a viable program.

The cooperative agreement between the Calcasieu Parish Library, the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana, and the Adult Education Department of the Calcasieu Parish School Board was originally set up to meet the literacy needs of our area. While it was generally understood that there

was a large illiterate population in the area (7.8% of the twenty-five and older age group), we were not fully aware of the scope of the problem and our limited abilities. The attention the program drew, at first, was minimal, but in a matter of months, activity at the Literacy Council headquarters mushroomed.

The setting up of a volunteer based one-on-one tutorial program involved recruiting both students and tutors, interviewing and testing, matching up pairs, maintaining individual records, monitoring student progress, scheduling meeting places and times, and keeping up-to-date office files.

The Literacy Council was originally staffed with only a part-time Executive Director who put in twenty hours a week. The amount of work was so overwhelming that it became necessary to hire a part-time secretary to handle clerical procedures. This remedied the situation for only a few months. The interest in the program continued to grow rapidly, tutors had to be trained quickly to meet student needs, needed materials had to received on schedule, and public relations contacts had to be established. With so many program aspects to attend to and so few people to do it, the program was in danger of going under.

The Junior League of Lake Charles, which originally funded the Literacy Council had no more funds to invest in the program and the Executive Director felt he could no longer work a 50 hour week and get paid for only a 20 hour week. While he was sincerely committed to the program, he simply could not afford to "volunteer" so many hours to the project on a regular basis.

The LSCA Title VI grant provided $8,000.00 to be used as for administrative costs incurred by the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana. The money was added to the Literacy Council budget as a salary supplement for the Executive Director. Should those funds have not

been available, the Literacy Council would not have been able to continue its operation, and the Executive Director, in all likelihood, would have resigned. This would have seriously affected the continuity of our program.

The impact of the LSCA funds can also be seen in the area of teaching materials. In the past year the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana has worked with approximately 204 volunteer tutors and 194 adult education students. The cost of providing tutor training materials was $4,125.00. the total amount spent on teacher manuals and student workbooks was 15,000.00. The average cost of taking one student through the complete program, from a 0 -5th grade level was estimated at $150.00.

In addition, new adult readers have been found to be generally excited about their newly acquired skills, and they are anxious to use them. For this reason additional supplemental materials were needed to help students practice and re-inforce their newly learned skills.

The cost of providing tutor training materials, teacher manuals, student workbooks, and supplemental materials for the needs of the 400 or so people involved in the program was extremely expensive. Approximately $21,000.00 was spent on these materials in the past year.

The LSCA Title VI Grant awarded to the Calcasieu Parish Library had significant impact on the existing literacy program. With these funds, the Library was able to purchase some much needed teacher manuals and student workbooks. The Library also purchased a number of supplemental adult titles dealing with life coping skills and general interest materials.

Without an adequate amount of teacher manuals and student workbooks available, potential tutors and students would have been placed on a waiting list. This could have resulted in tutors and students losing interest in the program and dropping out. The funds provided by the LSCA grant

were instrumental in providing the needed materials when they were needed. Students and tutors were provided the materials they needed on schedule.

Approximately $17,700.00 of the LSCA grant funds were spent on purchasing adult education materials. The Calcasieu Parish Library purchased multiple copies of approximately 175 titles. The volumes were housed in ten library locations across the parish. The Central Division Library set up the most extensive resource collection. It included reference volumes to be used by literacy program administrators, tutors, and reference librarians. It also included multiple copies of adult interest fiction and non-fiction books, with emphasis on life coping skills. Satellite collections with limited reference volumes but multiple copies of adult interest fiction and non-fiction titles were set up in the nine branch libraries across the parish.

The objectives set forth in the approved application have been met and exceeded. The success of the program, evidenced by a continuous growth rate, has been extremely encouraging to the volunteers and Literacy Council staff. The Calcasieu Parish Library, the Literacy Council of Southwest Louisiana, and the Adult Education Department of the Calcasieu Parish School Board have cooperatively met the challenge of providing literacy services to the residents of Southwest Louisiana. This, however, could not have been done without the $25,000.00 LSCA Title VT Literacy Grant provided by the U.S. Department of Education.

Overall, the Calcasieu Parish Library Literacy Project met accomplished the objectives specified in the approved application. There were no major changes or revisions in the program regarding approved activities and staffing. There was one major revision in the budget, but written approval of the revision was received from the U.S. Department of Education. All monies were expended leaving a balance of zero.